

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

MARGIE THINKS THE SLOW DEATH OF LOVE IS WORST

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"Give it to me at once."

Mollie held out her hand for the letter. Her face was white and her pain-drawn lips made with their pale tint a pathetic streak of color across her blurred features.

Only her eyes, with their feverish brightness, seemed wholly alive.

I gave her the letter silently. A little shudder passed over her as she grasped it and without a word she went into my bedroom and shut the door.

The letter came, as Chadwick Hatton said it would, in the morning. About noon Mollie called me up and said in a voice I did not recognize: "Margie, Chadwick has just wired me from the Mauretania that you had a letter from him to me. I can't understand why he is on his way to England or why you should be made the custodian of his letter of explanation to me, but I am coming up to let you explain. Margie, if you have interfered in Chadwick's and my plans I will never forgive you. I trusted you, Margie, I trusted you."

If one trusts you, little book, with the information that one is going to commit murder or suicide, what are the ethics to be followed? Should you let your friend go and do the deed after remonstrance on your part or should you try at all costs to prevent the deed? I don't believe that Mollie was quite certain in her own mind that she was doing right. If she had been she would not have told me anything about it, for she must have known that I would not tell her she was doing right.

I wonder what I would have done, little book, if this terrible choice between inclination and duty had come to me.

Do you know, little book, that although I would hardly dare whisper it to myself, yet I am afraid if it had

been Dick instead of Mr. Hatton who placed the situation before me that wondrous night before our marriage, when I felt that to "belong" to him would bring me the joy and happiness that can only be imagined, I would have gone with him unquestionably.

There, little book, I have said it to you, and while saying it I wonder in my heart of hearts if I am any different from any other woman? Do these austere women who look upon romantic love with the cold severity of the early Christian fathers ever tremble at the touch of a lover's hand upon their arm or their hearts go thumping at such a rate that to answer the caressing voice that set them beating is almost impossible.

Oh, little book! I'm so glad I've had it—the blinding, unquestioning love whose only prayer was to "belong" to my lover and I humbly, very humbly, thank the fates that brought it to me honorably in the eyes of the world.

But I have more than pity for those poor women who through force of circumstances must accept it in secret and pay for it with tears that sap the very heart's blood.

Poor Mollie! Just now in there she is probably telling herself that nothing will ever come to her again to make the springtime sing in her heart. She is saying: "Margie does not know. Margie cannot feel." But I do know the greater sorrow. Mollie has had her great passion wrenched from her heart and am seeing mine slowly die.

Every day it is borne on me more and more that to Dick I am the "goddess" no longer, but just an ordinary woman, who sometimes bores him to extinction. Little book, I feel sorry for him as well, for it must be a great disappointment to him or any other man to feel that over-powering love which possessed him before he pos-